

An Exploratory Investigation of the Valuing Processes of a Group of Fourth-Grade Pupils

ELIZABETH B. HIGGINS *

VALUES of both children and adults in today's society have increasingly become a matter of concern, definition, analysis, and study. Many statements and generalizations regarding the values of children appear to be based on opinion, limited knowledge, experience, and observation, largely unsubstantiated by research. This study attempted to investigate and explore the valuing of children in a systematic, long-term study, by encouraging and providing opportunities for children to write about their values.

Values, or valuing, in this study were terms defined as the universal wants, needs, and choices of man; a process of needing, wanting, desiring, deciding, and choosing. Valuing subsumes the thoughts, feelings, drives, motives, purposes, goals, and aims of the individual. This concept is differentiated from the use of the term "values" as it is commonly used to refer to the moral and spiritual realm. However, the moral and spiritual values were included in the broader use of the terms "values" or "valuing."

Harold Lasswell (4) developed a value classification framework, and for approximately 30 years has subjected it to a wide range of empirical experimentation over a broad scope and variety of activities, such as the Vicos Community Project in Peru, the Power Sharing Project at the Yale Psychiatric Institute (4), and other cross-cultural studies reported in his writing. Lasswell listed general value terms which provided a valuing classification scheme or framework under which most observable facets of behavior

could be categorized. The framework appears to be one which provided a method of classifying human needs, wants, and goals, and one which facilitates a better understanding of human behavior as it exemplifies valuing or a system of values.

On the basis of Lasswell's studies, W. Ray Rucker (7) adapted the classification framework and applied it to education. Rucker modified and restated each of the eight categories in terms of the needs of children as traditionally accepted, as results of organic and cultural bases of development.

Rucker stated these categories as:

The needs of children as identified by leaders in the child development literature are restated here within the context of the eight value categories as follows (the traditional statements are in italics):

1. AFFECTION for the child in the family, peer group, and community which satisfies the *need for emotional security and the need for relative freedom from fear.*

2. RESPECT status for the child in human relations which satisfies the *need for self-respect and for belonging in the peer group and in the larger community.*

3. SKILL development for the child in intellectual, social, and physical activities which

* Elizabeth B. Higgins, Supervisor of Curriculum and Instruction, K-12, Humanities and Performing Arts, Department of Supervision and Curriculum Development, Washington Center, Montgomery County Public Schools, Rockville, Maryland

satisfies the *need for feelings of adequacy and achievement*.

4. ENLIGHTENMENT for the child through transactional experiences which satisfies the *need for effective communications with others and the need for self-understanding*.

5. POWER for the child to participate in shaping the conditions under which he will live which satisfies the *need for individual and group creativity*.

6. WEALTH and vocational guidance for the child which satisfy the *need for economic security*.

7. WELL-BEING for the child which satisfies the *need for mental and physical health*.

8. RECTITUDE for the child expressing ethical and moral behavior which satisfies the *need for guiding purposes of life and relative freedom from feelings of guilt* (7: 24).

It was with the utilization of the Lasswell categories, the Rucker modified framework, and the VIDAC Dictionary of Values, by Abrams and Saxon (1), based on Lasswell's Dictionary of Values, that this study was conducted. Content analysis of the children's writing based on and standardized on the work of Lasswell, Rucker, and Abrams and Saxon may yield a method of discovering children's valuing patterns, needs, goals, and aims.

Although the total study included further analysis of the valuing processes of the fourth graders according to sex, socioeconomic status, and intelligence, the results are not included in this report. Results of that portion of the study, although available, cannot be presented in detail in this paper. An overview of the total study and results related to the total group of children is the focus of this report.

The rationale for this study was that, although needs of children have been discussed, little has been accomplished in determining children's values or valuing processes by a systematic, open-ended method that would yield results in terms of knowledge of children's values. Knowledge of children's needs, wants, goals, and motives is a valid basis for the development of curricula, and until such research is utilized, much of the activity of children in the classroom will be based on

guesswork, tradition, and the values of the teacher.

Specific Questions Explored

1. Can children's patterns of valuing be recorded through content analysis of writing over a period of time?

2. Will children's valuing enhancements and deprivations fluctuate or shift during the period of the study?

3. Will the sample weeks of children's writing produce an estimate of children's valuing?

4. Will content analysis of children's writing reveal more value enhancements than deprivations?

5. Were teachers' ratings significantly related to the enhancements and deprivations expressed by the children during the 20-week period of study?

(For further clarification, the term "value enhancements" indicated the processes of gaining and according values that contributed to the value-sharing concept of the democratic society. The term was used synonymously with the term "positive values." "Value deprivations" were indications of the withholding or absence of value-sharing ideas; this term was used synonymously with "negative values." For example, such words in a child's writing as like, love, admire, and kiss would be coded as valuing enhancements in the affection category; words of opposite meanings, for example, hate, dislike, and hit, were categorized as valuing deprivations, or negative values.) These are simple examples; more detail will be given in the following section.

Methods of Procedure

Since the purpose of this study was to discover and explore the valuing of fourth-grade pupils, the study was designed to obtain information directly from the pupils and to analyze it in an objective manner. The design was completed in the fall of 1967; the data gathering began in November 1967 and was concluded in May 1968, a total of six school months. The study proposed to: (a)

obtain writing from the children weekly on value cards; (b) analyze the content of the card utilizing the Lasswell (4) and Rucker (7) valuing frameworks and the VIDAC Value Dictionary compiled by Abrams and Saxon (1); (c) develop group and subgroup profiles for the subjects; and (d) establish the relationships, if any, between subjects' valuing and teachers' judgments of specified behavioral characteristics of children.

The sample. The subjects were 275 fourth-grade pupils, representing five schools and nine teachers in the Lemon Grove School District in Lemon Grove, California, a suburb of San Diego. Of the 275 pupils, 159 were boys and 116 were girls.

The nine classes were heterogeneously grouped and the intelligence quotients for the total group fell along the normal curve, but with a slightly higher than average mean intelligence score for both verbal and nonverbal measures. Scores from the Lorge Thorndike Intelligence Test, Form A, yielded a range of 51 through 150 on the verbal intelligence and a range of 71 through 137 for the nonverbal tests. Mean scores were: 105 for the nonverbal and 104 for the verbal measure. Standard deviations were: nonverbal, 12; and verbal, 17.

All ethnic groups—Caucasian, Oriental, Negro-American, Mexican-American, and other nonwhite—were represented. Ethnic origin was determined by surnames and physical characteristics. The children were predominantly Caucasian, but percentages, when compared with regional statistics, were similar. The distribution in the sample was: Caucasian, 227; Mexican-American, 31; Negro, 5; Oriental, 5; other nonwhite, 7.

A majority of the children came from homes of skilled workers, but other classes were represented. The community was suburban, but included an area which represented a 13 percent sampling of children designated as underprivileged or educationally deprived. Children were classified on the basis of parents' occupations, based on Warner's (8: 170) social scale. The distribution was: upper, 0; upper-middle, 4; middle, 38; upper-lower, 201; and lower, 32.

The instruments. Teachers were given an overview of the study, along with specific instructions for working with the children. Materials given to the participating teachers were: a sheet of instructions to be read to the children each week prior to the value card writing period; value cards for each child; and a data card for each child. A demonstration of the procedure was provided, and each pupil wrote a trial card which was not used in the study. Stated briefly, the instructions to be read to the children requested the children to write about problems, hopes, fears, needs, desires, or other feelings they wanted to describe. Children were assigned code numbers to assure anonymity and to encourage them to write freely. Each child was given a "value card" each week and was asked to write for 10 minutes.

The value cards were 5 x 8 mimeographed cards on which the child wrote his code number, school, and the date. Cards were collected by the teacher each week and sent to the investigator. Data cards were used for recording the total number of enhancements and deprivations for each category, along with the child's name, code number, age, and ethnic origin; as well as for recording intelligence test scores, estimates of classroom performance by the teacher, total number of cards written, and the total number of words written by each child.

Procedures employed in analysis of the data. After the information was completed on all the data cards, the cards were sorted for each child and placed with the data cards in the order in which they were written. The cards were equally divided among three coders who had participated in three four-hour training sessions which included:

1. Information and explanation of the value categories
2. Familiarization and practice in how the words in the children's writing were to be coded, tallied, and recorded
3. Instructions on how to determine the category for a word not listed in the value dictionary.

Prior to the coding and after the train-

ing sessions, reliability of coding among the coders was established by selecting 30 cards and having each trainee code the cards individually and separately. After analyzing the results, a reliability of .93 was obtained for the 30-card sample.

The coding process. The coding process was based on the Abrams-Saxon Value Dictionary (1), which was modified from Lasswell's Value Dictionary containing more than 3,000 common words that had been coded into the various value categories and the enhancement or deprivation indicated. The modification developed by Abrams and Saxon made the dictionary more applicable to the educational environment, rather than the field of political science for which it was originally written. All major words written by the children were coded except articles, conjunctions, prepositions, some pronouns, some adverbs, and some adjectives.

In addition to the systematic coding procedures provided, coders utilized the "Definitions of the Values and Verbal Equivalents"

from *The Human Values Series* by V. Clyde Arnsperger, W. Ray Rucker, and James A. Brill (2). This work provided a broader base of understanding for the coders and gave an additional resource for determining categorization of words. Sentences written by a child were used only to determine the meaning of the word from the context if not found in the dictionary or the "Definitions of the Values and Verbal Equivalents," which are mentioned in the preceding section.

It should be noted that not every child wrote something every week. Some children had several blank cards, others had few or none.

From the data cards, one for each child in the study, results were recorded on General Purpose Key Punch Layout sheets and were given to keypunch operators who punched and verified the cards.

Teacher ratings. Teachers were asked to rate each child in the room who participated in the valuing study on the following: (a) attitude toward school, (b) behavior,

N = 275				
Value Category	Sums	Means	Standard Deviations	Percent
Value Enhancements	34308	124.76	69.65	91.02
Affection	8618	31.34	19.85	25.11
Enlightenment	11553	42.01	30.84	33.67
Power	1251	4.55	9.09	3.64
Rectitude	952	3.46	5.64	2.77
Respect	1314	4.78	12.85	3.87
Skill	3631	13.20	12.18	10.58
Wealth	3744	13.61	13.49	10.91
Well-being	3245	11.80	10.60	9.16
Value Deprivations	3383	23.78	12.82	8.98
Affection	937	3.41	5.31	27.69
Enlightenment	602	2.19	2.80	17.80
Power	266	.97	2.52	7.82
Rectitude	111	.40	.90	.69
Respect	23	.08	.66	3.28
Skill	193	.70	1.35	5.70
Wealth	118	.43	1.03	3.48
Well-being	113	4.12	7.19	33.49
Total words coded *	37,691	79.27	—	31.26
Total cards from children **	5,066	18.42	4.71	—

* All words written by the children were read, and major words were coded. The 68.74 percent of the words were such words as: a, an, the, and, but, and other small words that were related to the main word that was coded. However, the prepositions, conjunctions, articles, and similar connecting words were not coded separately.

** Approximately 18 to 20 cards for each child were collected from November 1, 1968, to June 1, 1969. Each child wrote one card each week. Absences were made up if possible.

Table 1. Sums, Means, and Standard Deviations for the Total Group of Fourth Graders

Category	First Card		Last Card	
	Number	%	Number	%
Affection	565	25.29	369	23.26
Enlightenment	741	33.16	741	34.42
Power	56	2.50	66	4.16
Rectitude	64	2.86	48	3.02
Respect	95	4.25	107	6.74
Skill	225	10.07	161	10.15
Wealth	233	10.42	156	9.82
Well-being	255	11.41	133	8.38
Total	2234	99.96	1586	99.95

Table 2. Percentage of Responses According to Category for Value Enhancements for First Sample Card and the Last Sample Card

(c) popularity with other pupils, (d) reading ability, and (e) teacher acceptance, or the teacher's willingness to have the child in the classroom another year. Forms were provided along with the rating sheets, and teachers rated children according to specified categories as to their professional estimate of the child on the above traits or the teacher's acceptance of the child. This rating was done at the end of the year for two reasons: (a) the teachers could base the judgments on the entire year of work, and (b) daily incidents possibly affecting the teacher rating might be minimized.

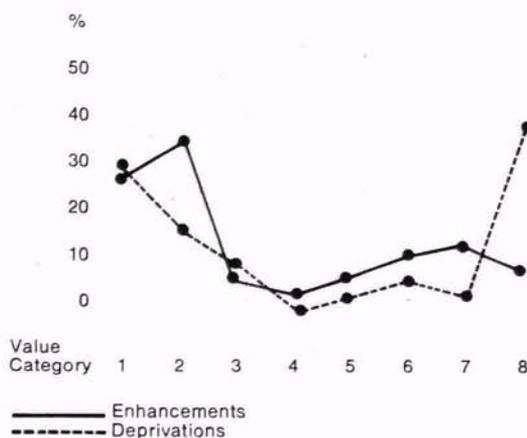


Figure 1. Approximate Percentages of Value Enhancements and Deprivations Indicated by the Total Group for the Entire Study *

* Numerals represent the valuing categories in the following order: Affection, Enlightenment, Power, Rectitude, Respect, Skill, Wealth, and Well-being.

Variables. From the data, 50 variables were identified to be analyzed according to the categories previously stated: (a) sex, (b) socioeconomic status, (c) ethnic origin, and (d) ability. Forty-four of the variables were from the original data and six additional ones were developed from the data obtained. The six derived variables were designated as: (a) total number of enhancements; (b) total number of deprivations; (c) total number of enhancements on the third card; (d) total number of positive values or enhancements on the third card from the last; (e) value shift, or the difference between the number of values by categories on the third card and the number of values by categories on the third from the last card; and (f) value direction, which indicated the difference between total number of positive values and total number of negative values by categories (See Tables 1, 2, and 3 and Figures 1 and 2). The value shift was developed to show change or fluctuation in valuing, from one week at the beginning of the school year to one week near the close of the school year, and to determine the accuracy of a one-week sample as related to the total information from the study. Value direction was to determine whether valuing tended toward enhancements or deprivations for each of the categories (See Table 3).

Computer tabulation. Information obtained from the computer processing included the following: (a) a group valuing profile for the entire group of subjects; (b) a valuing profile for the several subgroups according to sex, verbal intelligence, and teachers' estimate of ability (high, average, or

low); (c) socioeconomic status, ethnic group; and (d) a comparison of the changes in profiles from the third card and the third from the last card written by the children.

Correlations, coefficients, totals, means, and standard deviations were shown in the results of the computer analysis. A test of statistical significance at the .001, .01, .02, and .05 levels was developed from the Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficients. Further processing of the data facilitated analysis of the subgroups, and the teacher rated items according to range, means, and standard deviations.

All words written by the children were read and major words were coded and categorized. Thirty-one percent of the children's words were coded; the remaining words were articles, prepositions, conjunctions, or other small words related to the major words, and could not be coded separately (See Table 1).

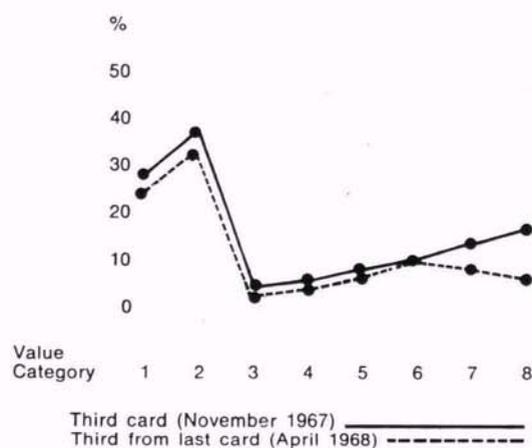


Figure 2. Approximate Percentages of Value Enhancements Indicated by Children in a Sample on the Third Card and the Third from the Last Card

Results pertaining to the specific questions. Results from the analysis pertaining to the questions stated at the beginning of the study were:

1. Children's writing did reveal patterns of valuing which were recorded and categorized through the use of content analysis.

2. Children's valuing patterns shifted from the beginning to the end of the study (See Table 2, Figures 1 and 2).

3. The two sample weeks, when compared with the enhancements profile for the total group, appeared to produce an estimate of children's valuing (See Figures 1 and 2).

4. Content analysis of the children's writing revealed more valuing enhancements than deprivations, with 91.02 percent of the valuing indications suggesting enhancements (See Table 1).

5. Teachers' ratings were significantly related to the valuing enhancements and deprivations of the children in 12 of the 96 comparisons made (See Table 3 for these relationships).

Teachers' rating categories	Significant correlations * with pupils' valuing responses	
	Enhancements	Deprivations
Ability	Power, Skill	Wealth
Behavior	x	x
Attitude toward school	Respect	x
Teacher acceptance	Respect	Affection
Reading ability	Affection, Power Rectitude, Skill	x
Popularity	Power	Power

N = 275: 116 girls; 159 boys

* Correlations significant at the .01 level or higher.
x—correlations were not statistically significant.

Table 3. Statistically Significant Correlations Between Teachers' Ratings and the Valuing Enhancements and Deprivations for the Total Group of Fourth Graders

Other findings indicated that:

1. The Enlightenment valuing enhancements and the Affection enhancements were consistently in first and second place in the rank order for the valuing enhancements (See Table 4).

2. Power and Rectitude were consistently at the seventh and eighth places in rank order for the valuing enhancements (See Table 4).

Assessment of the Study

The major strengths of the study were: (a) the duration of the study; and (b) the open-ended instrument utilized to obtain

Value enhancements for total study	First sample card	Last sample card
Enlightenment	Enlightenment	Enlightenment
Affection	Affection	Affection
Wealth	Well-being	Skill
Skill	Wealth	Wealth
Well-being	Skill	Well-being
Respect	Respect	Respect
Power	Rectitude	Power
Rectitude	Power	Rectitude

Table 4. Comparison of Rank Order of Value Enhancements by Categories for the Total Time of the Study, the First Sample Card, and the Last Sample Card

data. Another strength was the use of a framework for classifying valuing indications, a specific method of coding and analyzing the written expressions of the subjects in the study.

Limitations of the study were, of course, the number of subjects, lack of precise instrumentation of assessment of valuing, limited knowledge and sparsity of literature on research on valuing, and lack of an established base for measurement of children's valuing.

The fact that data were obtained from children's writing limited children in expressions of values; some children did not write as rapidly or as well as others; some children were not as verbal as others. Although children were assured anonymity by the use of a code number rather than a name, there is no certainty that children did, or were able to, write of their deep needs, choices, motives, concerns, or values.

Other limitations were the suburban nature of the sample, the ever-present teacher variable, and the limited geographic location of the study.

Most investigations stimulate more questions and problems than they solve. This seems a valid conclusion in this study, which emphasized the need for more research in the area of human behavior and valuing. Reliable knowledge of children's valuing, based on research utilizing a more definitive instrument, larger sample, and more stratification, may be the base of a more appropriate, relevant curriculum designed for children with special needs and deprivations as well as for those with value enhancements. It seems ap-

propriate to suggest that teachers be sensitized to children's needs, valuing enhancements, and deprivations, as well as to their ability, behavior, attitude, popularity, and reading ability.

Even though the research shows some general central tendencies of valuing for children in the study, there were wide differences in the drives and goals of individual children. This emphasizes the need to reconsider each child as an individual whose needs and desires are unique and shift from time to time. It appears that, through verbal communication and nonverbal communication, teachers and educators can learn to be aware of needs of individual children as revealed in conversation, behavior, writing, painting, or role playing; that they can learn to identify the need or goal, recognize the deprivations and enhancements in valuing, and utilize the power of this knowledge and awareness to achieve a more effective relationship with the child to release learning energy that will enable the child to develop to his highest potential.

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